## Record of Decision

## Town of Bloomsburg, Columbia County, Pennsylvania
## Flood Damage Reduction Project

The Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (FR/ EIS) for the Town of Bloomsburg, Columbia County, Pennsylvania, dated August 2005, documents the problems and opportunities relative to reducing damages from flooding in the study area. Based on this report, along with the views of interested agencies and the concerned public, and the review of my staff, I have determined that the plan described in the FR/EIS and recommended in the report of the Chief of Engineers to be economically justified, environmentally acceptable, technically feasible, and in the overall public interest.

The recommended plan consists of a series of floodwalls and levees which would reduce damages in the Town of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania against flood which has a 0.23 percent chance of occurring in any given year (a 440-year return frequency storm). The plan includes approximately 17,600 linear feet of levees and floodwalls, 9 drainage structures, 8 closure structures, and 7 road raisings. Additional structural protection against flooding with a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year (100-year return frequency storm) is provided on Fishing Creek to mitigate induced flooding to Fernville, Pennsylvania. The recommended plan would also include a flood warning system to operate in conjunction with structural protection system and the existing flood warning network maintained by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Implementation of the recommended plan would require the permanent removal of an estimated 22 residences, 3 commercial structures, and 1 County building, as well as the relocation of a trailer park. The recommended plan would reduce average annual damages by about 66 percent.

Both structural measures and non-structural measures were considered to reduce flood damages. Structural measures that were considered included channel deepening and widening, modification of bridge and culvert openings, detention of flood waters, and construction of floodwater barriers such as levees, floodwalls, and mechanically-stabilized earth (MSE) walls. Non-structural measures included acquisition of flood-prone property, floodplain zoning, floodproofing, and flood warning systems. Floodwater barriers were the most viable and sustainable solution to meet defined objectives. Three alignments were evaluated in detail: (1) interior alignment, (2) fringe alignment, and (3) east Bloomsburg extension alignment. All of the potential construction alternatives (other than taking No Action) would have flood damage reduction benefits.

Alternative 4 - the Fringe Alignment and a Fernville Levee for Hydraulic Mitigation, is the National Economic Development (NED) Plan and the recommended plan. It is also one of two plans that can be identified as environmentally preferable. All practicable means have been adopted to avoid or minimize the adverse effects from implementing the recommended plan. However, this plan would result in minor temporary adverse effects on the human environment: Construction of the NED plan would require the unavoidable filling of approximately 0.7 acres of wetlands and the permanent loss of up to 3,000 linear feet of forested riparian bank as a result of rip-rap placement. To offset these impacts, approximately 1.1 acres of non-wetland area would be graded to retain surface water and planted with native wetland trees and shrubs. Additionally, a timber crib structure on Fishing Creek would be removed to restore anadromous fish access by reconnecting fish habitat in lower Fishing Creek with habitat in the Susquehanna River. A five-year post-construction monitoring phase would ensure replacement of wetland functions. This monitoring would consist of annual site visits to survey the wetland plants, hydrology and soil development, along with photo documentation of the wetland condition.

Technical, environmental, and economic criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resource Council's *Principles and Guidelines.* All applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and local plans were considered in evaluating the alternatives. The recommended plan is the least environmentally damaging alternative and incorporates features to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce and compensate adverse environmental effects. Based on review of these evaluations, I find that the flood damage reduction benefits to be gained by construction of the recommended plan outweigh the costs and any adverse effects. This Record of Decision completes the National Environmental Policy Act process.

January 9, 2007
Date

John Paul Woodley, Jr.
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Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)